



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

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THREE WOMEN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR SMUGGLING CHILDREN INTO THE U.S.

TUCSON, Ariz. – Veronica Boroquez-Tafolla, 31, of Eloy, Arizona, was sentenced on August 3, 2006, to 18 months in prison, and three years of supervised release, by U.S. District Raner C. Collins. Boroquez-Tafolla had pleaded guilty on April 28, 2006, to conspiring to transport an illegal alien.

In two additional unrelated cases, Diana Catherine Jiron, 31, of Tucson, Arizona, was sentenced on August 2, 2006, to 18 months in prison and three years of supervised release, by U.S. District Judge Cindy K. Jorgenson. Belen Ruiz-Palafox, 36, of Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, was sentenced July 27, 2006, to 15 months in prison and two years of supervised release, by U.S. District Judge Frank R. Zapata. Both women pleaded guilty to conspiring to transport an illegal alien, Jiron on May 16, 2006, and Ruiz Palafox on May 3, 2006.

All three women were charged with smuggling young children across the U.S.- Mexico border.

On February 20, 2006, Boroquez-Tafolla had presented herself for admission into the United States at the port of entry in Nogales, Arizona. She was accompanied by a two year old child who she claimed was her cousin's daughter. Boroquez-Tafolla claimed that both she and the child were U.S. citizens. Further investigation revealed that the child was a Mexican citizen, and that Boroquez-Tafolla was to receive \$800.00 to smuggle the infant into the United States.

On March 19, 2006, Jiron also presented herself for admission into the United States at the port of entry in Nogales, Arizona. Jiron was accompanied by an 11 year old child who she claimed was her nephew. Jiron also claimed that both she and the child were U.S. citizens. Further investigation revealed that the child was a Mexican citizen. According to Jiron, her landlord had offered her free rent for one month, approximately \$600.00, to smuggle the child into the U.S.

On November 25, 2005, Ruiz-Palafox also presented herself for admission into the United States at the port of entry in Nogales, Arizona. Ruiz-Palafox was accompanied by an 11 year old child who she claimed was her daughter. Ruiz-Palafox and the child both presented border crossing visas, and claimed to have authorization to enter the United States. Further investigation revealed that the visa did not belong to the child who presented it, and that Ruiz-Palafox was to receive \$500.00 to smuggle the child into the U.S.

The investigation in all of these cases was conducted by Customs and Border Protection, Nogales, of the Department of Homeland Security. The prosecutions were handled by Cynthia R. Wood, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-0600 (Boroquez-Tafolla)
CR-06-0725 (Jiron)
CR-05-2384 (Ruiz-Palafox)

RELEASE NUMBER: 2006-141(Boroquez-Tafolla&Jiron&Ruiz-Palafox)

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